

Headen Bridge (Kelly Bridge)
County Road 87, spanning Hiawassee River
Hiawassee Vicinity
Towns County
Georgia

HAER No. GA-46

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Headen Bridge (Kelly Bridge)

HAER No. GA-46

Location:

County Road 87 (Streakheal Road) spanning
the Hiawassee River, southeast of Hiawassee,
Georgia

UTM Coordinates: 17.3866460.252460
Quad: Macedonia, Georgia

Date of Construction:

1916

Present Owner:

Towns County, Georgia

Present Use:

Vehicular Bridge

Significance:

Despite the corrosive forces of the
natural elements, the Headen Bridge
retains intact its original architectural
configuration and functional components,
and is an excellent example of an early
twentieth century pin-connected Pratt
through truss.

Historian:

Hal Cole, Transportation Planner Associate,
Georgia Department of Transportation

Constructed in 1916, the Headen Bridge was originally situated over the Hiawassee River at a location near or just inside the northern city limits of Hiawassee, Georgia. As a result of the damming of the Chatuge River by the Tennessee Valley Authority and subsequent formation of Lake Chatuge, the structure was moved in the early 1940s to its present location on Streakheal Road (County Road 87), southeast of the Hiawassee city limits. The rural setting of its original location, however, is maintained where it is presently situated. Its present name is after the Kelly family whose residence is on Streakheal Road quite near the structure.

The Kelly Bridge is a single span, Pratt through truss with pin connections, built up channels and laced posts, and is carried on rubble abutments. It is one of 30 known Pratt through trusses found throughout the state, and one of four found within the twenty-one county area of northeast Georgia making up the Georgia Department of Transportation's District 1. The structure is, however, the only example of its type found in Towns County.

Headen Bridge measures 104 feet in length and 14 feet 8 inches in width. The bridge plate, still intact on the structure, carries the inscription, "J. M. Johnson/Ordinary." According to Reuben Walls, present Ordinary of the county, Johnson held this office from 1904 until 1922. Department of Transportation maintenance records date the bridge to 1916.

The structure shows evidence of severe corrosion in several of its lower members and in general reflects varying stages of oxidation. All of its original components, however, including guard rails and bridge plate remain intact. Overall, the Headen Bridge is considered structurally deficient and in poor condition by the Georgia Department of Transportation Bridge Maintenance Department.